

VA CHICAGO LINKS

Lakeside ER Reduces Hours of Service

The Lakeside Emergency Room will be closed nightly from 10 pm to 8 am, beginning June 16. These hours will be effective until the August 7 transition, when the LS Emergency Room will keep the same hours as other clinics – weekdays from 8 am to 4 pm.

The closing of the Emergency Room at night is expected to have little impact on patients. Presently, the Lakeside Emergency Room averages less than one patient per night.

Patients are being informed of these changes via a personal letter sent to every veteran who has been to VA Chicago within the past three years. Flyers, posters and brochures have also been developed to inform veterans needing urgent care during off hours of the accessibility of emergency services at West Side.

Computer Workshop for Job-Seeking Vets

Job seekers hear it all the time -- computer skills are one of the most prized qualifications by potential employers. Now, VA Chicago's Mental Health Service Line has established a new program to teach computer skills to veterans and help them become more employable.

The Veterans Employment Re-Integration Workshop, which begins June 24, is a 10 - week program held on Tuesday mornings at West Side. Its purpose is to offer computer training, including Microsoft Word, Outlook, Excel and Internet use, that will provide veterans with needed job skills and also assist them in their employment searches.

The workshops will also bring in guest speakers, including managers and personnel specialists, to help veterans with their interviewing skills. After the workshops are completed, VA will work with the Illinois Department of Employment Security to help its graduates find employment.

"This is a pilot program, but we hope to offer it permanently," says Glenn Shalton, vocational rehabilitation specialist. "We understand the value of employment in the veteran's community. It provides stability, self-esteem and the opportunity for veterans to give something back to their community."

Veterans must be referred by a VA clinician and interviewed (including a typing test) before they can be accepted into the workshop. Clinicians interested in making a referral should send Glenn Shalton an e-mail message that includes the veteran's name and phone number.

IMD Honors VA Police

Detective Lieutenant **Walter Gilliam** and Officer **Elliott Lang**, Police and Security Service, were recognized by the Illinois Medical District Security Group during its annual awards ceremony held May 30.

Detective Lieutenant Gilliam was cited after he successfully subdued and apprehended a veteran wanted on a felony murder arrest who had been receiving medical treatment at VA facilities across the nation, but had eluded capture. After VA Chicago Police observed the man seeking care at the West Side Campus and determined he was the individual identified in the nationwide alert, Lieutenant Gilliam secured his arrest and remanded the suspect into the custody of the Cook County Sheriff's Department.

Officer Lang was also cited for identifying and securing the arrest of a felon. After detaining a patient who had been creating a disturbance, Officer Lang ran a background check through the Illinois State LEADS system and learned he was wanted on felony drug trafficking charges. The suspect was remanded into the custody of the Chicago Police Department.

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Private Sector Agree: CPRS is one of Best

VA's computerized medical records system is generally recognized as a leader in the health care field. So, it was no surprise that a recent demonstration of VA Chicago's Computerized Patient Records System (CPRS) attracted a large group of health care professionals from institutions throughout Chicago.

Dr. Lewis Coulson and CPRS team members Laurie Blum-Eisa, John Ptak and Joanne Abeling discussed and demonstrated the capabilities of VHA's computerized system on May 30 to a private sector health care audience that included representatives from Rush, Northwestern, Cook County and the University of Chicago.

Dr. Dale Gerding, Chief, Medical Service, Lakeside Division, will also demonstrate CPRS later this summer to representatives from the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago.

"VA's medical records system is generally considered as one of the best, if not the best, in the country," says Dr. Coulson, Associate Chief of Staff at West Side. "Other hospitals are very interested in the possibility of purchasing VA's system for their own use to improve patient care and patient safety."

Programs developed by the federal government, including CPRS, are

in the public domain and can often be purchased at the government's cost. VHA's medical records system has gained prominence over the past several years and is already being used by hospitals throughout the world.

Workshop to Assist Staff Interactions

After receiving positive reviews for its recent relaxation workshops, VA Chicago's Employer of Choice Committee is hosting a new series of workshops entitled "Enhancing Communication and Problem-Solving Skills."

"Enhancing Communication and Problem-Solving Skills" is a 45-minute program that teaches practical skills useful in everyday interactions. It uses the key points distilled from the full-day "Treating Veterans with CARE" workshops offered through Education Service.

Each one-hour period is a complete class. Employees may register at time of attendance.

Friday, June 27 – Lakeside Room 617-D at 8 am, 2 pm and 7 pm

Wednesday, July 9 – West Side auditorium at 8 am, 2 pm and 7 pm

Wednesday, July 9 – Lakeside Room 617-D at 8 am and 2 pm

Friday, July 11 – West Side auditorium at 8 am and 2 pm

Mark Your Calendar

Juneteenth Celebration –

Wednesday, June 18 from 11 am to noon in the Lakeside auditorium and Thursday, June 19 from 10:30 to 11:30 am in the West Side auditorium. Featuring games, prizes, refreshments and entertainment by WVON-DJ Richard Pegue.

Thrift Savings Plan – Open Season ends June 30.

Independence Day Holiday – Friday, July 4. All clinics are closed.

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**VA Chicago Health Care
System**

Richard S. Citron - Director

Editor – Raymond Leber
Public Affairs Officer

Design – Kim Gawne
VAVS